

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

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FM AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6038

INFO AMEMBASSY KIGALI

USMISSION USUN

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUJUMBURA 0284

E.O.: 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PARM, BY, RW

SUBJ: RWANDAN REACTION TO SOVIET ARMS SALES TO BURUNDI

1. DURING MY MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BAGAZA ON MARCH 17, I STEERED THE CONVERSATION AT ONE POINT ONTO THE PROBLEM OF BURUNDI'S ARMS ACQUISITIONS ABROAD, MAINLY FROM THE USSR. I NOTED RWANDA'S DISQUIET AT THIS DEVELOPMENT AND SAID THAT, EVEN IF I KNEW THAT BURUNDI HAD NO HOSTILE INTENTIONS TOWARD RWANDA, AUTHORITIES IN KIGALI COULD NOT HELP BUT FEEL UPSET AS THEY SAW SOVIET SUPPLIES GO TO TWO NEIGHBORS, UGANDA AND BURUNDI. NO ONE COULD FORGET PAST TENSIONS BETWEEN RWANDA AND BURUNDI, EVEN THOUGH EVERYONE HOPED THEY WERE GONE FOREVER. HENCE, BURUNDI HAD TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF ITS MILITARY POLICIES ON ITS NEIGHBOR.

2. BAGAZA SAID THAT THE RWANDANS HAD RAISED THIS MATTER WITH THE NEW REGIME IN BURUNDI SOON AFTER THE COUP D'ETAT ON NOVEMBER ONE, MAINLY IN THE CONTEXT OF THEIR FEAR THAT THE OUSTER OF MICOMBERO MAY HAVE BEEN SOVIET INSPIRED. BAGAZA NOTED THAT THEY HAD BEEN REASSURED AND APPARENTLY
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SATISFIED ON THIS POINT, WHICH WAS A NONSENSICAL SUPPOSITION. HE COULD SEE THAT I WAS RAISING A "SALT-TYPE" ISSUE WITH HIM, AND HE WANTED TO ASSURE ME THAT THERE WOULD BE NO ARMS RACE IN THIS REGION. IN FACT, HIS GOVERNMENT HAD MADE NO NEW ARMS PURCHASE CONTRACTS. IT WAS ONLY RECEIVING ARMS BOUGHT BY MICOMBERO.

3. I REJOINED THAT IT HAD BEEN BAGAZA HIMSELF WHO HAD GONE TO THE USSR TO NEGOTIATE THE ARMS ACQUISITION IN 1976. HE ANSWERED THAT HE HAD DONE IT AS AN AGENT OF THE OLD REGIME. ANYWAY, HE HAD BOUGHT ONLY LIGHT ARMS THAT WERE NOT INTENDED TO BUILD UP BURUNDI'S ARMY BUT TO REPLACE WORN OUT EQUIPMENT. I NOTED THAT SOME OF THE "LIGHT ARMS" INCLUDED MOBILE VEHICLES, TANKS, AND ARTILLERY, AND THAT SOME OF ITS WAS ALREADY REACHING BURUNID. I URGED HIM AGAIN TO EXERCISE SOME SELF-DISCIPLINE IN HIS BUILDUP OF THE ARMY, EVEN IF IN HIS OWN MIND HE KNEW THAT IT WAS ALL FOR INTERNAL SECURITY PURPOSES.

MARK

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 18-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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